

DOVER BEACH

About the author

1. Resolve to be thyself; and know, that he who finds himself, loses his misery.
2. Journalism is literature in a hurry.
3. Wandering between two worlds, one dead, The other powerless to be born.

Author	Mathew Arnold, poet and cultural critic
Birth	1822, England – The valley of Thomas
Death	1888
Cause of death	Heart failure
Post	inspector of schools and Professor in Oxford in 1857
Period	Victorian Age
Family	He was the son of Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby School, and brother Tom Arnold, literary professor, and William Delafield Arnold, novelist and colonial administrator.
Called as	a sage writer- a chastises and instructs the reader on contemporary social issues.
Pen name/ pseudonym	under the pseudonym "A," he published <i>The Strayed Reveller</i> a collection of short lyric poems
Introduction	Touchtone method in criticism- The term used for Middle class- Philistine
Works	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems - 1849 2. <i>Empedocles on Etna</i> and Other Poems - 1852 The poem is written on Greek theme. 3. <i>Poems</i> – 1853 4. <i>New Poems</i> - 1867: It contains famous critical preface. It contains poems <i>Dover Beach</i> and <i>A Summer Night</i>. 5. The Scholar Gypsy: The poem is written on the life of Clough. 6. Culture and Anarchy – 1869. <i>It</i> is a series of periodical essays by <i>Matthew Arnold</i>, first

	<p>published in Cornhill Magazine 1867-68 and collected as a <i>book</i> in 1869. The preface was added in 1875. <i>Arnold's</i> famous piece of <i>writing on culture</i> established his High Victorian..</p> <p>7. Literature and Dogma - 1873: It deals with poetry and religion.</p> <p>8. Sohrab and Rustum: It is based on a Persian theme.</p> <p>9. Memorial Verse: It mourns on the death of Wordsworth, Gothe and Byron.</p> <p>10. Thyrsis: It was an elegy on the death of Clough.</p> <p>11. Essays on Criticism (1865 and 1889): This is his prose work contains the best of his critical work</p>
<p>He read most Bhagvad Gita. His view of culture is best described by light and sweetness.</p>	

About the work

Written in the year	1851
Published in the year	1867
Published in	In the collection 'New poems'
Inspiration/adaptation	inspired by two visits he and his new wife Frances made to the white cliffs of Dover stand, just twenty two miles from the coast of France
About	modern conditions of the people.
Type	Lyric poem with melancholy, the conversation poem, dramatic monologue.
Theme	The central theme of "Dover Beach" is the conflict between religious faith and scientific knowledge. Modern condition- Optimism, Spiritual discontent, Decline of spiritual belief.
Subject	The poem expresses a crisis of faith, with the speaker acknowledging the diminished standing of

	<p>Christianity, which the speaker sees as being unable to withstand the rising tide of scientific discovery. A distinct clash between religion and the modern world, science and illustrates how the beauty of the world is corroded with the loss of faith.</p> <p>The scene described in the poem is the English Channel at Dover, with the chalk-cliffs looking bright in the soft moonlight. The 'love' addressed in the poem is Arnold's newly married wife Frances Lucy Wightman. Religious faith was at low ebb during his age. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution shacked people's faith in Christianity and also there was much industrial unrest in the country. Arnold says that true love is the only remedy for all problems.</p>
Place	The shore of the English ferry port of Dover, in Kent, at the Strait of Dover, the narrowest part of the English Channel. He went there for his honeymoon with his wife Frances Lucy Wightman in 1851.
Addressed to	Arnold's wife as Love
Poem	Honey moon poem
Narrator	The poet
Technique	the basic iambic pattern
Rhyme scheme	No specific rhyme scheme but last stanza has the rhyme scheme of -abbacddcc

Dover Beach

Poem

The sea is calm tonight,

The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! You hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back and fling
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.
Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.
Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,

So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Dover Beach' is one of the best-known and best-loved of Victorian poems.

Summary

Dover Beach is pervaded by melancholy.

The poem opens with **the image of beauty**. Arnold is in his bed-room, and looking out through the window. The place Dover Beach is very near from the French Coast. The poet asks his beloved (wife) to come to the window and **watch the beautiful scene. The waves are ebbing and flowing. This to-and-fro movement of waves produces a crashing noise.** The poet says that **there is something sad about this sound.**

“seems

To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;”

Arnold compares himself with the ancient Greek dramatist Sophocles. **Sophocles, a 5th-century BC Greek playwright wrote tragedies on fate and the will of the Gods.** He might have stood on the Aegean coast in Greece and watched the waves moving forwards and backwards. **The ebb and flow is a symbol of human misery.**

Religion has declined. **A vacuum has arisen in human minds.** Arnold feels that this **vacuum can be filled up only with mutual love.**

People are mentally pained. **They are like an army fighting one another in the dark. They kill their own friends, mistaking them for foes.** There is

misunderstanding everywhere. Only sincere love can console distraught men and women.

He hears **the sound of the sea as “the eternal note of sadness”**. Sophocles would have also heard this sound.

Arnold turns to the action of the tide itself and sees in its retreat for the loss of faith in the modern age. But now I only **hear its melancholy**, long, withdrawing roar. **But the poem opens with the image of beauty.**

The sounds like a simple description of the waves tossing the pebbles about the place on the shingly beach, but behind it there lurks **the Victorians’ geological fascination** with pebbles, shells, and other remnants of the Earth’s distant past.

Arnold established **the symbol of 'Sea of Faith'**. According to Arnold the sea full of water symbolized the **past religious faith of Victorians**. Now the spiritual faith, now vanished- “The Sea of Faith Was once, too, at the full and round earth's shore Lay like the folds of a bright gridle furl'd.”

Arnold was discontent with the current state of society during his time; this poem is coming from the point of view of a man who feels as **though society is not as beautiful** as it once was. However, he sees a glimmer of hope through his lover (**Optimism.**)

Opening lines
The sea is calm tonight, The tide is full, the moon lies fair Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
Closing lines
And we are here as on a darkling plain Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, Where ignorant armies clash by night.
Important lines
1. "With tremulous cadence slow, and bring The eternal note of sadness in." 2. The sea is calm tonight. The tide is full, the moon lies fair

Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay. Come to the window, sweet is
the night-air!

3. Only, from the long of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land, Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

4. The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

5. Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Literary Devices

Assonance- Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in the same	the sound of /e/ and /o/in “Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light”.
Alliteration: Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds in the same	the sound of // in “To lie before us like a land of dreams”.
Enjambment: - a thought or verse that does not come to an end at a break instead moves over the next	And we are here as on a darkling plain Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight
Pathetic Fallacy: objects are attributed to human emotions	“Listen! you hear the grating roar, Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling” and “eternal note of sadness.” Human beings experience these feelings attributed to pebbles.
Symbolism: using symbols to signify ideas and qualities, giving them symbolic meanings different from literal meanings.	, “sea of faith” symbolizes faith in god and Tide leaving the shore” is the symbol of lost faith.
Allusion: an implied or indirect reference especially in literature; a poem that makes allusions to classical literature; also the use of such references.	Sophocles, a Greek dramatist and third stanza “sea of faith” refers to the world of religions
Simile: used to compare something with something else to make the readers understand what it is. “	“To one another! for the world, which seems To lie before us like a land of dreams.”
Metaphor	the tide itself and sees in its retreat a metaphor for the loss of faith in the modern age
Imagery	He trades visual imagery for aural imagery, describing the "grating roar" of the pebbles being pulled out by the waves

William Butler Yeats responds directly to Arnold's pessimism in his "The Nineteenth Century and After":

Though the great song return no more
There's keen delight in what we have:
The rattle of pebbles on the shore
Under the receding wave

